UNIVERSIDAD DE CHILE

NEWS

International cooperation

The University of Chile welcomed Rahul Gandhi to a historic meeting on democracy and global change.

Indian opposition leader and parliamentarian Rahul Gandhi, grandson of Indira Gandhi, held a discussion with academics, students, and authorities at Casa de Bello. At the meeting, organized by the Faculty of Government and the IEI, Gandhi outlined India's role as a cultural bridge, his vision of deglobalization, and the challenge of building a democratic development model in the face of inequality.

Rahul Gandhi, a member of the Indian Parliament, along with Professor Andrés Bórquez, highlighted the need to strengthen ties with Latin America in the face of common challenges and interests.

Demonstrate to the world that it can build a democratic manufacturing model and confront the enormous inequality created in recent decades , with a vast majority of people living in extreme poverty and a small elite controlling the entire economic system. These are the two fundamental pillars on which the work of the **Inclusive National Alliance for India's Development** , a coalition led by the country's largest opposition party, the **Indian National Congress** , whose main figure is MP **Rahul Gandhi** , is based .

Visiting our country, specifically at the **University of Chile** , the opposition leader held a discussion on Friday, October 3, organized by the **Institute of International Studies** and the **Faculty of Government** . During the discussion, Gandhi met with authorities, politicians, academics, and students, to whom he explained how he views India's role in the current multipolar environment.

“For thousands of years, India has acted as a cultural bridge. It has been the center of the spice trade, with long-standing relations with the Roman Empire, the Middle East, and Europe. For centuries, we have exported pepper to the Roman Empire,” he recalled.

He also clarified that Indian political thought offers two fundamental ideas. The first, expressed by **Mahatma Gandhi** , is that **nonviolent action can be more powerful than violent action** . “Gandhi showed that, although the British Empire had immense strength, it lacked true power in the face of nonviolent resistance. The second idea is that India has never used force on the global stage, yet it still exercises power. The concept of power in India is feminine, not masculine. It is an indirect power, based on intelligence, not force. Therefore, India responds in a subtle, non-confrontational manner,” he stated.

The US and the BRICS

When asked about his country's role within the **BRICS , Rahul Gandhi acknowledged that India has maintained a strategic relationship with the United States** since the 1990s , including economic and military cooperation. However, it also has historical ties with **Russia** , from which much of its military equipment comes, and active relations with **Brazil** and **China** within the BRICS group.

He also emphasized that while the United States has been India's closest partner, providing global stability after World War II, today the American power "is experiencing difficulties and acting more erratically, making short-term tactical decisions rather than long-term strategies. We hope it will regain its strategic vision and value its relationship with India."

Regarding India's presence in Latin America, Gandhi admitted that it hasn't received enough attention. "We've focused too much on the United States and Europe. We should strengthen

ties with Latin America, as we face similar challenges and have common economic interests: we import metals and raw materials, and we could expand cooperation in health, education, and tourism," he concluded.

Climate change

It's worth noting that **climate change and its consequences for humanity are issues of particular concern** to the Indian opposition leader.

“Everyone on the planet is going through several transitions. First, a transition in how we move. In the 20th century, we did it with internal combustion engines, using oil. Before that, with steam and coal. Even before that, with animals. Now we're moving from the gasoline engine to the electric motor, with battery storage. That's a fundamental transformation. The second transition is toward renewable energy: solar, wind, and, in part, nuclear, leaving behind highly polluting sources like coal. The third transition is the decline of the United States' power. For decades, it was the world's superpower, creating infrastructure, standards, and maintaining global peace. But now it's losing that ability to control, as seen in Ukraine or Gaza, and its financial system is being challenged by China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and even Bitcoin,” he stated.

But in Gandhi's view, these three transitions are interconnected, and large countries must navigate them without collapsing. In this regard, he admitted that, in the current scenario, **India's main challenge is its relationship with China and its strong ties with the United States, a relationship whose tensions are likely to increase** .

“These transitions are also opportunities: if India approaches them strategically—solar, wind, nuclear, and electric mobility—it can build the standards and architecture of the new world. Of course, we are heavily dependent on coal, and the transition must be gradual. But both the government and the opposition agree on the need to make it,” he concluded.

Reactions

The director of the Institute of International Studies, **Professor Dorotea López Giral** , defined the Indian parliamentarian's visit to the University of Chile as a milestone **for our institution and for relations between India and Latin America** . "His presence represents a unique opportunity to strengthen academic, cultural, and human ties between both countries, at a time when South-South dialogue is gaining increasing relevance on the international stage. The recent cooperation agreement between the University of Chile and Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) is precisely in line with this vision: to build bridges between two university

traditions with a strong public commitment, profound critical thinking, and an international vocation. For our university community, welcoming Rahul Gandhi is an opportunity to hear voices from other countries, and for students to understand firsthand how the challenges of the world we live in are intertwined."

Por su parte, el decano de la Facultad de Gobierno, **profesor Leonardo Letelier Saavedra**, se mostró gratamente sorprendido con el conversatorio. "Tuvimos ocasión de conocer de primera fuente los grandes problemas y desafíos que enfrenta India; sus relaciones internacionales; el papel que hoy juega el país en el escenario internacional y su proyección en América Latina en particular".

El decano también destacó que durante la conversación se abordaron temas especialmente relevantes para Chile, como **el desarrollo científico en el área de la astronomía y la lucha contra el cambio climático mediante la transición hacia energías verdes**.

Finalmente, quien guio la conversación con Rahul Gandhi, el coordinador del Programa de Estudios Asiáticos del IEI, **profesor Andrés Bórquez**, describió esta visita como "un acontecimiento histórico que nos permite abrir un espacio de reflexión académica con una de las figuras políticas más relevantes de la India contemporánea".

Para el académico, este encuentro fue especialmente significativo para los estudiantes del **Magíster en Estudios sobre Asia**, que él también coordina en el IEI. "Esta conversación es una oportunidad concreta de conectar el aprendizaje en el aula con la realidad política y cultural de la India. Para la Universidad de Chile, esto representa un paso más en su misión por formar líderes globales. Además, su visita no solo fortalece el diálogo académico entre Chile y la India, sino que también resalta la **presencia creciente de estudiantes indios en nuestra institución**. Su participación enriquece la vida universitaria y refleja el carácter global y diverso de nuestra comunidad académica", expresó.

Comunicaciones Facultad de Gobierno e IEI
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